

FAKHRUDDIN 'IRAQI

DIVINE FLASHES

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM C. CHITTICK and
PETER LAMBORN WILSON

PREFACE

BY

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR



PAULIST PRESS
NEW YORK • MAHWAH

Introduction

I The Mystical Philosophy of the Divine Flashes

Islam's fundamental teaching declares: "There is no god but God." Throughout Islamic history practically every school of thought has sought to elucidate this teaching in its own way. In general the theologians (*mutakallimun*) based their explications of God's Oneness on the evidence—incontrovertible in their eyes—provided by the Koran and the *Hadith* of the Prophet. The Peripatetic philosophers (*masbsha'iyyun*) tried to prove God's Unity by appealing to the powers of man's intellect (*'aql*) and the data provided by his sense perception. But the Sufis added a third source of knowledge to the above two: direct vision of the realities of things, or mystical "unveiling" (*kashf*), which is also referred to as "contemplation" (*shubud*, *mushabadab*) and "direct-perception" (*dhawq*).¹ In their view, unveiling is incomparably more reliable than the unaided intellect, which can never attain true certainty concerning any matter of lasting importance, in other words, concerning God or man's ultimate end. But at the same time unveiling must be based on revelation and cannot gain-say it. Most Sufis were careful to warn their followers against anyone who ever said or did anything that contradicted the fundamental teachings of the Islamic revelation, even if he should claim divine inspiration and produce "miracles" in support of his claim.²

The intermediate position adopted by the Sufis, in which intellect was subordinate to unveiling and unveiling to revelation, is clearly represented by the teachings of the School of Ibn al-'Arabi. Ibn al-'Arabi himself often chooses a mode of expression that makes one think he is claiming a source of inspiration above even the authority of the Koran, although in other places in his own works he modifies this position by insisting on the supreme authority of the Koran and the Prophet. Moreover, his followers, especially his successor and

INTRODUCTION

spiritual heir, Sadruddin Qunawi—'Iraqi's master—clearly situate Ibn al-'Arabi's teachings within the hierarchy referred to above. And later Sufis have invariably seen Ibn al-'Arabi through Qunawi's eyes.³

These considerations help to explain the peculiar method Sufis like 'Iraqi employ to explain the nature and consequences of God's Oneness. 'Iraqi does not set out to write a Peripatetic exposition or to appeal to the reader's intellect—even though the logical consistency of *Lama'at* shows that he does not ignore the rational faculty. Rather, his explication of God's nature and man's relation to it is based primarily on the intermediate domain specific to the Sufis, that of mystical unveiling, direct-perception and spiritual intuition. But the ultimate authority of the Koran and *Hadith* is never forgotten.

In discussing God's Oneness, the various schools of Islamic thought employ a variety of terms to refer to the Ultimate and Unique Reality. The theologians speak about "God" (*Allab*) and in Koranic terms explain the nature of His Names and Attributes and His relation with the world and man. The Peripatetic philosophers call the Ultimate Reality the "Necessary Being" (*wajib al-wujud*). The Illuminationist philosophers refer to the Ultimate Reality as "Light" (*nur*). The Sufis use innumerable terms, most of them Koranic and most of them immediately identifiable as Divine Names.

As for the particular Sufi school of Ibn al-'Arabi, it also employs numerous terms, including "*Allab*" and "Truth" (*haqq*), although each term it uses has a particular technical connotation. Among the most important of these terms is "Being," the same word employed in the Peripatetic formulation "Necessary Being." So important is this term in Ibn al-'Arabi's teaching that his school is usually referred to as that of the "Oneness of Being" (*wahdat al-wujud*). His disciple Qunawi amplifies and refines Ibn al-'Arabi's teachings on Being's Oneness and in the process begins to bridge the gap between them and those of the Peripatetics.

As for 'Iraqi, he follows—to use his own words—"the tradition of the *Sparks* (*Sawanib*).⁴" In this Persian work, Ahmad Ghazzali (d. 520/1126), the younger brother of the more famous theologian and Sufi Abu Hamid Ghazzali, states that the Ultimate Reality is "Love" (*ishq, mahabbah*), and on the basis of this statement constructs a complex metaphysics.⁴

The very fact that Ghazzali concerns himself primarily with metaphysics should be enough to alert the reader that in Ghazzali's

INTRODUCTION

view, the statement "God is Love" does not carry the usual sentimental or emotional overtones. He draws conclusions that would seem peculiarly intellectual to most Christians who hold the same belief. In spite of certain appearances, his "mysticism" is basically one of knowledge, not of love as usually understood.⁵

Numerous Sufis followed Ghazzali in speaking of God as Love, among them 'Iraqi. But 'Iraqi did not follow the terminological details of Ghazzali's metaphysics, only his identification of God with Love; and as with Ghazzali, 'Iraqi's teachings are based purely on a contemplative vision of the realities of things. When 'Iraqi discusses the nature of Love, he displays a profound comprehension of the metaphysical teachings of his own master, Qunawi. But by identifying God with Love throughout the work, and by employing the same sort of mixed Persian prose and poetry that Ghazzali uses, 'Iraqi is able to state quite correctly that he is following the tradition laid down by Ghazzali.

But the fact that 'Iraqi follows Qunawi's teachings means that his use of the word Love is not just a question of terminology. It is not as if he decides to call God "Love" and to leave everything else the same. True, often it would be sufficient to change "Love" to "Being" in 'Iraqi's sentences to produce statements identical to those of Ibn al-'Arabi's followers who preserved the master's terminology. But this is not always the case. For Ibn al-'Arabi has teachings about Love *qua* Love, which are in turn dealt with extensively by Qunawi and 'Iraqi.

So 'Iraqi's discussion represents a synthesis of two slightly different points of view. In one respect Love is identical with God or Being, as in Ghazzali's *Sparks*. In another respect Love is one of God's Attributes, as in Qunawi's teachings. But even in Qunawi's teachings these two points of view can be combined into one, for if Love in one respect is an Attribute of God, in another respect it is identical with His very Essence. It is God Himself. For, as Qunawi maintains, "The Attributes are in one respect the very Essence Itself. . . . They are the very same as the Essence in the sense that nothing exists there but the Essence. But they are different from the Essence in the sense that the concepts understood from the Essence are definitely different from one another."⁶

In short, 'Iraqi discusses the Oneness of Being in terms of Love. He emphasizes that Being and Love are the same thing, for every Attribute of God is only the Essence viewed from a certain point of

INTRODUCTION

view. But the existence of that point of view means that Love can be spoken of in a language peculiar to itself, for that point of view is different from any other.

'Iraqi's originality, then, is that he follows Ghazzali in calling Ultimate Reality "Love," and thus he neglects the terminology relating to the discussion of Being preferred by most of the other members of Ibn al-'Arabi's school. At the same time, almost everything he says about Love—not to speak of Love *qua* Being—is derived from the teachings of his master, Qunawi. But nowhere does his master, nor any of the other followers of Ibn al-'Arabi, succeed in presenting a discussion of Love in such a delightful and readable manner.

So 'Iraqi is discussing the Divine Unity, or the Oneness of Being, in a language peculiar to discussions of love. To clarify these remarks further, it is necessary to explain what Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers mean by the "Oneness of Being," and what they have had to say about Love's relation to Being. How is it that Love is an Attribute of God, and as such, identical with His very Essence?

THE ONENESS OF BEING

"Being is One." This sentence is a constant refrain in Qunawi's writings. To explain its meaning and implications in any detail and in the overall context of Qunawi's works would be far beyond the scope of the present introduction.⁷ Here we can only hope to summarize his teachings in the barest outline.

"Being" is that which, by its very nature, *is*. It cannot not be. As for what exactly is meant by this term "to be," on the one hand its meaning is self-evident, and on the other, it is almost impossible to grasp. Everyone has an immediate intuition of what it means for something to "be" or to "exist." In fact, nothing can be closer to our experience and knowledge. The Sufis would emphasize that "I only think because I *am*." In any case, everyone grasps immediately the difference between the existence of something and its nonexistence. Otherwise, there would be no difference between having something and not having it.

But at the same time, almost no one truly grasps the fundamental nature of this "is-ness." Unless it is accompanied by some object or thing, no one can comprehend it. Everyone knows what is meant by "the pencil exists," or that the common measure between "the pencil exists" and "the galaxy exists" is their existence or is-ness. But re-

INTRODUCTION

move all pencils and galaxies, all objects and entities. What then is meant by is-ness as such? What can it mean that we have defined *being* as “that which, by its very nature, is,” when there is no definable thing that is? How can one comprehend this sort of is-ness when it does not correspond to any object whatsoever?

According to Ibn al-‘Arabi and his followers, that being which by its very nature *is*, and cannot not be, is “nonentified” (*ghayr muta‘ayyan*) or indeterminate. We cannot truly name or describe it. Whatever we describe as possessing such and such an attribute, we define, delimit, and determine. We make it identical to some entity. But being as such—Being—is nonentified and indeterminate. It has no description or delimitation. It is no particular *thing*, not even that “thing” which we usually call “God,” that is, as a Reality distinct and separate from the world.

How do we know that Being is nonentified? Because every entity that has being, every thing that exists, is a delimitation of Being as such. We say, “The horse *is*, the tree *is*, Tom *is*, the devil *is*, God *is*.” The common measure is is-ness. Nor is this is-ness a mental construct. Rather, it is the fundamental nature of all things.⁸ Each entity, each thing, each existent, is one possibility of “entification” (*ta‘ayyun*) hidden within the nature of Sheer Being, just as each color is one possibility of “coloration” possessed by the very essence of pure light.⁹

If Being is to assume every single entification and delimitation, in Itself it must be nonentified. It must be able to manifest Itself in every form.¹⁰ For if It were large and only large, nothing small could exist. If It were the Creator and only the Creator, there would be no creatures. These points are summarized in the axiom “Each entification must be preceded by nonentification.”¹¹ Every existent entity or thing derives from a source that in relation to it is indeterminate and

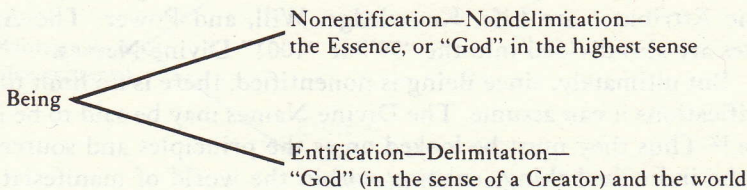


FIGURE 1: PRELIMINARY DIVISION OF BEING AS SUCH

INTRODUCTION

nonentified. Thus a "horse" is an entification of "animal." If animal were by its very nature horse, there could be no dogs or lions. So the entification "horse" is preceded by the relative nonentification "animal." In a similar way, the entification "animal" is preceded by the relative nonentification, "living corporeal-body." But if all living corporeal-bodies were animals, there could be no plants. Finally, when we reach Being Itself, we reach absolute Nonentification, so there can be nothing beyond it. Moreover, since Being is absolutely Nonentified, all entifications are forms It may assume.

Nonentified Being is none other than the Essence (*dhat*) of God. To answer the question "Why does God create the 'world?' (*al-'alam* = "everything other than God")); or, moving back to a second question implied in the first, "Why does the Essence of God, Nonentified Being, become entified as God the Creator and His creation?" we must investigate more carefully the nature of Being as such.

Being in Itself is Nonentified, and consequently nondelimited, inarticulated, without name, attribute, or quality. So It cannot be described in positive terms. It is Unknown. But as soon as Being assumes any entification, that entification can be described (see Figure 1). Now these entifications are not accidental. The very nature of Being Itself demands that It possess certain "Perfections" or "Possibilities of Self-Manifestation" or "Potentialities" in keeping with which entification will take place. For Being is the source of all things, and therefore also of all properties, laws, and regularities. It has Its own order, rhythm, and modes. It reveals Itself—becomes entified—only in keeping with Its own nature, a nature that possesses certain concomitants and properties that are reflected in all things. These concomitants or ontological perfections are summarized in God's "Names and Attributes" (*asma' wa sifat*), which are Being's universal entifications. The Names and Attributes divide the infinite possible entifications of Being into a number of universal categories. Thus the basic Attributes are Life, Knowledge, Will, and Power. The Attributes are also divided into the "99" or "1001" Divine Names.

But ultimately, since Being is nonentified, there is no limit to the entifications it can assume. The Divine Names may be said to be infinite.¹² Thus they must be looked on as the principles and sources of all the individual things existing within the world of manifestation. Here they are no longer called Names and Attributes, but rather "archetypal-entities" (*'ayn*), "realities" (*haqiqah*), and "meanings" (*ma'na*). And when existence is bestowed on them, these very archety-

INTRODUCTION

pal-entities become the existent-entities of the world. Hence in Arabic and Persian, the one word "entity" (*ʿayn*) is used for both the archetypal-entity and the existent-entity, indicating that ultimately the two are one and the same. "Entity" in this sense is synonymous with "thing" (*shay*) and "quiddity" (*mabīyyah*). All three terms indicate a single reality that may be existent or nonexistent, depending on whether it is considered as manifested within the world or nonmanifest within God's Knowledge (see Figure 2).

In short, by Its very nature Nondelimited Being possesses all possibilities of Self-Manifestation (*zūbur, tajallī*). By Its very nature It is Alive and has Knowledge, Power, Will, Hearing, Sight, Speech. It can assume the entification that is represented by every single "possible existent" (*mumkin*), every creature, every thing. However, that "very nature" is unknowable to us, except through revelation. And even then, the only thing that can be explained is God as He manifests Himself—that is, His Names and Attributes—not God as He is in His very Self. That can only be known by the great prophets and saints within the inmost recesses of their own reality.

When Being is envisaged from the point of view that It embraces all Names, Attributes, and the possible entities, It is called the "First Entification" (*taʿayyun-i awwal*). At the level of this entification, the infinite possibilities of Self-Manifestation possessed by God are delineated within His Knowledge, but they are all "nonexistent" and nonmanifest.

The First Entification has numerous names, depending on our point of view. Some of these are important for our present discussion

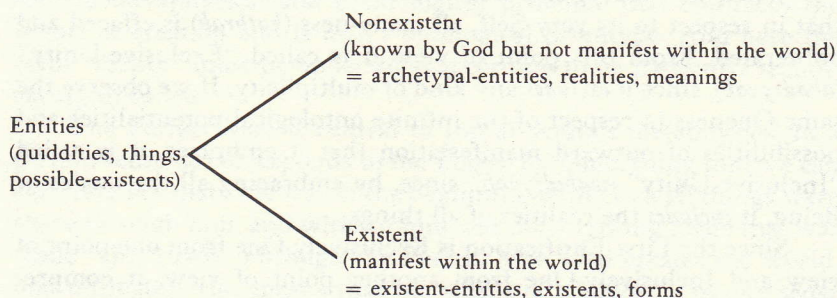


FIGURE 2: PRELIMINARY DIVISION OF THE KINDS OF ENTITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Entification (God's Knowledge of Himself and all things)
2. Oneness
 - Exclusive-Unity (Only God *is*)
 - Inclusive-Unity (God's One Being embraces all Names and Attributes and all entities)
3. The First Isthmus-Nature (The First Entification stands between and comprehends both Nonentification and entification)
4. The Most Holy Effusion = The Unseen Theophany (The First Entification embraces God's Unseen Knowledge of all entities, which become manifest through the Holy Effusion or the Visible Theophany)
5. The Reality of the Perfect Man (The First Entification is the archetypal-entity of the Perfect Man)

FIGURE 3: SOME NAMES OF THE FIRST ENTIFICATION

(see Figure 3): Since the First Entification represents the sum total of all the potentialities of God's Self-Manifestation, but in a state where each potentiality is identical with every other and with Being, it is called "Oneness." Nonentification Itself cannot be referred to as "One," since It is beyond all names and attributes. We can only say, in the manner of the Vedantists, that it is "not this, not that." Qunawi even declares that to call Nonentification "Being" is not strictly correct. "That is not Its true name."¹³

When we observe this Oneness of the First Entification, we see that in respect to its very Self, all many-ness (*katbrab*) is effaced and obliterated. From this point of view it is called "Exclusive-Unity" (*abadiyyah*), since it *excludes* any kind of multiplicity. If we observe the same Oneness in respect of the infinite ontological potentialities and possibilities of outward manifestation that it embraces, it is called "Inclusive-Unity" (*wabidiyyah*), since, by embracing all the modes of Being, it *includes* the realities of all things.

Since the First Entification is Exclusively-One from one point of view and Inclusively-One from another point of view, it comprehends both Oneness and the Principle of many-ness. Thus it acts as the intermediary between the Essence's Nonentification and the enti-

INTRODUCTION

fied creatures, or between the absolute Independence of God and the dependence and need of the existent things. From this point of view it is referred to as the "First Isthmus-Nature" (*barzakbiyyat-i ula*). For an "isthmus" is something that lies between two other things and comprehends the attributes of both.¹⁴ On the one hand the First Entification is One and is nothing other than Being, since it is only different from the Nonentification of the Essence in respect of the fact that it is the potentiality of the Essence's Self-Manifestation. On the other hand, it embraces all the perfections of Being, each of which requires a different locus-of-manifestation, so it is the principle of creation and multiplicity.

As the locus of God's Knowledge of Himself and the station within which "He manifested Himself to Himself in theophany" (*tajalla bi-dharibi li-dharibi*), the First Entification comprehends all the archetypal-entities and realities before they enter into outward existence. In this respect it is called the "Most Holy Effusion" (*fayd-i aqdas*) or the "Unseen Theophany" (*tajalli-yi ghaybi*). It is contrasted with the "Holy Effusion" (*fayd-i muqaddas*) or the "Visible Theophany" (*tajalli-yi shabadi*), through which the archetypal-entities act as receptacles for being and become existent-entities, or in other words, through which all the worlds are created. This Holy Effusion is also called the "Second Entification."¹⁵

In respect of the fact that the First Entification comprehends all the perfections of God and the world in a single, all-comprehensive unity, it is referred to as the "Reality of the Perfect Man," a term that needs to be explained in some detail.¹⁶ For the Perfect Man is not simply a human individual who has reached "perfection." He represents a metaphysical and cosmological principle that embraces the whole of creation and is man's ontological prototype. And here the term "reality" must be understood according to its particular technical significance.

The Perfect Man is central to Ibn al-'Arabi's metaphysics. In a certain sense he corresponds to the Logos, for concerning him we can certainly say that "He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:2-3). Through the Perfect Man God creates the world, and ultimately this means that the whole of creation is in one sense identical with him. In the Islamic universe the most perfect outward manifestation of the Perfect Man is of course the Prophet Muhammad.

INTRODUCTION

Other prophets and the saints can never quite attain his station. Hence the "Reality of the Perfect Man" is also referred to as the "Muhammadan Reality."

In order to explain the nature of the Perfect Man more thoroughly, we have to refer to the "Five Divine Presences," or, in other words, the five universal planes of Entified Being. These five "ontological levels" (*maratib al-wujud*) or five "worlds" (*'awalim*) summarize all things or entities into five general categories.¹⁷

In Islamic religious terminology, things are divided into two general kinds: those we are able to see with our physical eyes, and those we cannot see. Thus, in the Koran God is often referred to as the "Knower of the Unseen and the Visible." But as Qunawi explains, there is one entity that is neither totally Visible nor totally Unseen, that is, man and, *a fortiori*, the principle of which man is the manifestation, the Perfect Man. Hence at first sight all of Entified Being can be divided into three kinds. In Qunawi's words, "Although the ontological levels are numerous, they are reducible to the Unseen, the Visible, and the reality which comprehends these two."¹⁸

As was indicated above, Entified Being can be divided into two basic kinds of entities, the nonexistent and the existent. These two can be said to correspond to the Unseen and the Visible.¹⁹ Nonexistent or Unseen entities are those that are known to God but not manifest within the world. The existent or Visible entities are outwardly manifest within the world. Some of them are completely visible to the naked eye. These things belong to the corporeal world. Others are in close proximity to God, but although "Unseen" in relation to us, they must be considered "Visible" in comparison to God's Unseen Knowledge. These are the Spirits, also referred to as "angels" or "intellects." Finally, some entities stand between the Spirits and the Corporeal-Bodies. These are known as the "Image-Exemplars." They are "luminous" like the Spirits, but unlike them they can appear in corporeal shapes. They form an "isthmus" between the Spirits and Corporeal-Bodies, thus establishing a relationship between the two sides. Without the isthmus the Spirits in their pure luminosity and subtlety would be completely cut off from the Corporeal-Bodies in their unmixed darkness and grossness. These three created worlds—that of the Corporeal-Bodies, the Image-Exemplars, and the Spirits—make up three of the Five Divine Presences. The other two are the uncreated divine Knowledge, and the Perfect Man, who is both created and uncreated at the same time.

INTRODUCTION

When Qunawi enumerates the Five Presences, he usually does so as follows (see Figure 4): The First Presence is the First Entification, or the Presence of Divine Knowledge, also referred to as the "Unseen." The Second Presence, which faces the Unseen in the opposite position, is the World of Corporeal-Bodies or the Visible. This is the "material world," within which man finds himself situated. The Third and Central Presence is that of the Perfect Man, who acts as a partition between the two sides and at the same time comprehends and includes both of them. The Fourth Presence, to the right of the Perfect Man and nearer to the Unseen, is the World of the Spirits or angels, which includes the Universal Intellect (= the Supreme Pen), the first thing created by God. The Fifth Presence, to the left of the Perfect Man and nearer to the Visible, is the World of Image-Exemplars (*mitbal*) or Imagination (*kbayal*), within which spirits become corporealized and appear to prophets and saints in visions; and within which is the "Isthmus" after death, where moral qualities and works become spiritualized and personified. These five Presences embrace all levels of entification, from the uncreated to the lowest level of the created. Only the Nonentified Essence—Being as such—is outside of them.

Since the Perfect Man encompasses all the Presences, his total macrocosmic nature has five levels: (1) his reality or archetypal-entity, which is the First Entification (here we have the technical usage of the word "reality" in the expression the "Reality of the Perfect Man" referred to above); (2) his spirit, the Universal Intellect, which comprehends the whole of the World of the Spirits and is the first thing created by God; (3) his soul, or the World of Image-Exemplars, which acts as an intermediary between his spirit and his body; (4) his body, which corresponds to the whole of the corporeal world; (5) his nature as such, which comprehends all Presences. Obviously, man as an individual is a "microcosm" reflecting all these levels (Figure 5). And all these levels taken as a whole, which comprise the fifth level—that of the Perfect Man as such—are the mirror image of Nonentified Being.

So all that exists may be divided from a certain point of view into two categories: On the one hand is Nonentified and Nondelimited Being, on the other all the entifications Being assumes, entifications that are comprehended into a Unity by the Perfect Man (see Figure 6).

We have seen that everything other than Nonentified Being is an entity²⁰ and that the entities are of three kinds: "nonexistent," "exis-

INTRODUCTION

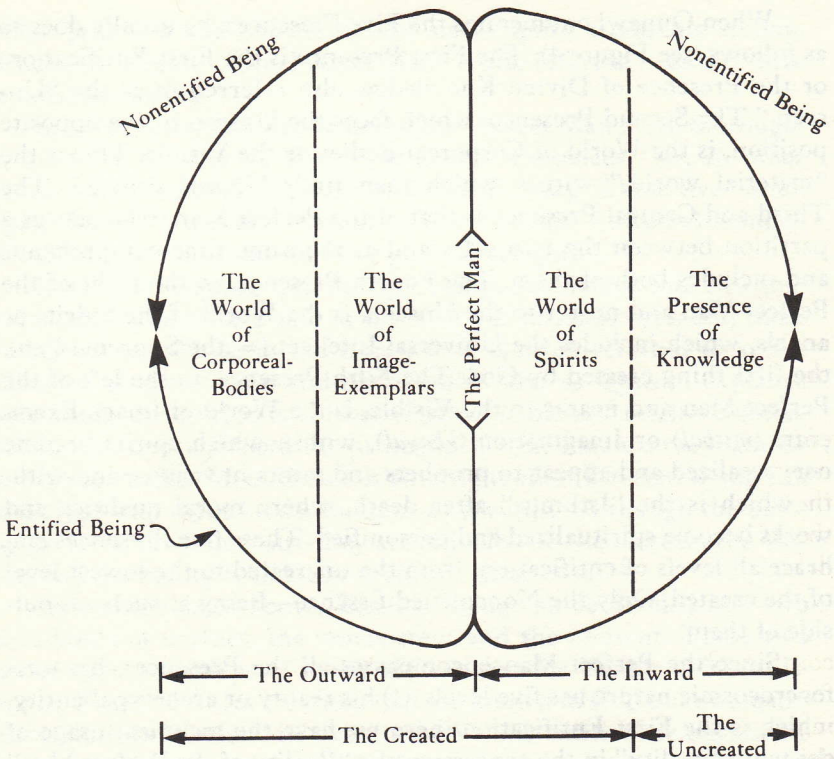


FIGURE 4: THE FIVE DIVINE PRESENCES
(The Perfect Man comprehends all of Entified Being)

tent," and "both nonexistent and existent" (see Figure 7). But here we must follow *Qunawi's* analysis of Entified Being one step further. We speak of the "existence" of the entities, but, in fact, this is inaccurate. Our starting point was that "Being is One," and that only Being *is*. There are not two or more Beings, two or more existences. The plurality of the entities cannot affect the fundamental axiom of Being's Oneness. So how can we correctly speak of "existents" in the plural? Is it not true that there is only one Existent?

In fact, since Being is One, and since it is the only true Reality, the entities *as entities* have no positive reality. They remain always nonexistent in themselves. Whatever existence they seem to possess is

INTRODUCTION

<i>Individual Man</i>	<i>The Perfect Man</i>
1. his archetypal-entity	1. The First Entification
2. his spirit	2. The World of the Spirits
3. his soul	3. The World of Image-Exemplars
4. his body	4. The World of Corporeal-Bodies

FIGURE 5: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL MAN AND THE PERFECT MAN

not their own. It belongs only to God, the only Being there is, the only thing that may truly be said to *exist*.

Being is Light, and nonexistence is darkness. So the nonexistent entities are never themselves outwardly manifested, just as darkness itself is never seen. Whatever is seen is Being, Light, the only reality there is. Only the effects of the nonexistent entities are perceived, in the sense that the removal of certain perfections from Light (= the delimitation of Being) allows us to see colors. But the color, the entity, that which is manifested, is nothing but Light Itself.

So all entities considered in themselves are nonexistent, whereas considered in relation to Being they are the possibilities of Self-Manifestation inherent within It. Hence nothing but Being exists. And Being is One. So when we speak of "existence," we mean Being as delimited, defined, and colored by the entities, or in other words, Be-

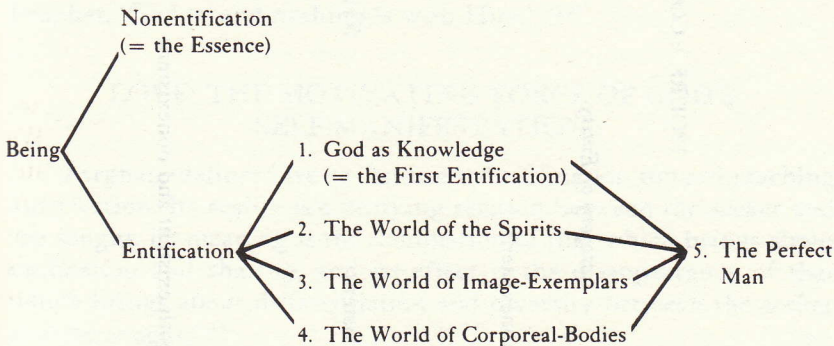


FIGURE 6: THE TOTALITY OF BEING

FIGURE 7: COMPREHENSIVE DIVISION OF THE KINDS OF ENTITIES

<i>Category of Entity</i>	<i>Synonymous Names</i>	<i>Corresponding Adjective</i>
nonexistent	archetypal-entities, meanings, realities	supraformal
existent	<div> <div>forms, existents</div> <div> <div>spirits, angels, intellects</div> <div>image-exemplars, imagination, images</div> <div>corporeal-bodies, sensory things</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>spiritual</div> <div>imaginal</div> <div>corporeal, sensory</div> </div>
both existent and nonexistent	the Perfect Man, the True Man	all-comprehensive

INTRODUCTION

ing as It becomes outwardly manifest in respect to one or more of Its perfections. The Self-Manifestation of Being *as such* is then the Perfect Man, who comprehends all the perfections of Being in their full deployment and in their unity at the same time.

The Perfect Man acts as a receptacle for all of Being's perfections. He does not delimit and define Being, so that some of Its perfections would be visible and others hidden. Hence it is sometimes said that the Perfect Man has no entity.²¹ For the "entity" is that which is nonexistent in itself and detracts from Being's pure Radiance. But the Perfect Man reflects Being as such. In this sense he himself is nothing but Sheer Being, and is therefore nonentified.

In short, no matter how much we speak of this and that, things, attributes, colors, entities, delineations, characteristics, properties, these are all nothing but the radiation of Being, nonexistent in themselves. Only the One Being *is*.

Qunawi summarizes the nature of the Oneness of Being in numerous passages, including the following: "God knows all things as a result of His very Knowledge of His own Essence. He is not qualified by any knowledge derived from other than Himself or through other than Himself. Then He bestows being upon the world in accordance with His Knowledge of the world in Himself from Eternity-without-beginning. So the world is the form of and locus-of-manifestation for His Knowledge, and God never ceases to encompass the things in Knowledge and Being. . . . Everything which becomes manifest becomes manifest only from Him, since nothing else possesses a being which might accompany His Being. This is the news given by the Prophet: 'God is, and nothing is with Him.'"²²

LOVE: THE MOTIVATING FORCE OF GOD'S SELF-MANIFESTATION

Farghani defines love as "an inward inclination toward reaching a perfection. Its reality is a unifying relation between the seeker and the sought, its meaning is the domination of that which brings about unification and sharing, and its effect is the disappearance of that which brings about differentiation and diversity between the seeker and the sought."²³

Love, then, begins with consciousness of an imperfection and a desire to eliminate it. The desired perfection becomes the goal or beloved of him who is imperfect, the lover. Moreover, the existence of

INTRODUCTION

this inclination depends on a unifying relation between the two sides. This relation is referred to technically as "affinity" (*munasabah*). It is defined as "a property through which unification is brought about between two things."²⁴ It means that there is already something shared between the lover and the beloved, something on the basis of which the affinity can be said to exist. This something must be strengthened and perfected for the lover to attain his goal, which is the disappearance of those attributes that prevent unification and union. If there were no common factor shared between the two sides, the lover could never make the beloved the object of his quest, for he could never even gain knowledge of the beloved.

Qunawi writes, "It is inconceivable that one thing should love another thing in the respect that that thing differs from it. It can only love that thing as a result of the property of some meaning shared between the two of them, in respect of which an affinity is established between them, an affinity which will lead to the domination of the property of 'that which brings about unification' over the property of 'that which brings about differentiation and separation.' As a result of knowledge and awareness of this affinity, the person who has this knowledge and awareness will seek to remove totally the properties of separation and to manifest the dominating force of 'that which brings about unification.' Then complete union will definitely follow."²⁵

Now this love, which depends on an affinity between lover and beloved and which results in union, stems from a Divine prototype. It exists, and like all things that exist, it must derive from the very nature of Being Itself. It must be one of the infinite ontological perfections.

The Divine prototype of love is expressed by means of the words "I loved" (*abbabtu*) in the famous *hadith qudsi* in which God says, "I was a Hidden Treasure and I loved to be known. So I created the creatures that I might be known." The "Hidden Treasure" is an allusion to the infinite ontological perfections of God, which, as we have said, are summarized as the Names and Attributes.

Now the Essence Itself is nonentified. So the level to which the pronoun "I" in "I loved" refers is the First Entification, within which God's Attributes are delimited, defined, and known. For if God is to say "I was a Hidden Treasure," He must have consciousness of this Treasure. Thus God's words refer to the level where we can speak of His Self-Awareness, that is, His Knowledge. Moreover,

INTRODUCTION

it is only here that we can speak of the "necessity" for creation, or of a certain imperfection that needed to be overcome, for Being Itself is "Independent of all the worlds" (Koran III:97). In speaking of the "mystery of 'I loved,'" Qunawi remarks that the pronoun "I" refers to the Lord (*rabb*), since the Lord by His very nature must have a vassal (*marbub*) over which He can exercise His Lordship.²⁶ In a similar manner, Ibn al-'Arabi states that each Name and Attribute demands a locus-of-manifestation within which its perfection may be displayed. Hence the Divine Names "demand in themselves the existence of the world."²⁷

In order to understand the significance of these remarks by Qunawi and Ibn al-'Arabi, we should recall that love was defined as "an inward inclination toward reaching a perfection." If we say that God possesses Love, are we not maintaining that He is somehow imperfect? The remarks of Ibn al-'Arabi and his disciple mean that God's Love does imply a certain "imperfection" from a certain relative point of view. But this imperfection is in truth a perfection and the source for the appearance of all other perfections.

To review what we have already said, we should recall that a distinction must be made between God as such—the Essence, Nonentified Being—and God as He reveals Himself to us through His Names and Attributes. Being in Its Nonentified Plenitude is perfect in every sense, for It can lack nothing. All things, all perfections, are only Its possibilities of Self-Manifestation actualized. In the words of another of Qunawi's disciples, Being is "that which is *thing* in every respect" (*ma huwa ash-shay' min kull wajh*).²⁸ All the infinite things that have existed, do exist, and will exist are nothing but Being's manifestations, precisely because they *exist*. Thus Being possesses all perfections—which are nothing but modes of existence—by Its very nature. To speak of It as "imperfect" is meaningless.

But when we examine Being as entified by the Attributes, that is, at the level where we can say that God possesses such Names as "Living, Knowing, Powerful, Creator, Loving," a certain kind of theoretical imperfection can be envisaged, although it remains purely theoretical and suppositional, since it can never be actualized. Each Name taken as a reality in itself is different from the Essence, although it is nothing but one of the Essence's perfections. But viewed in itself, it can be considered as possessing a certain difference from Being as such. In other words, the "All-Forgiving" (*al-ghafur*) is nothing but God, but God in His Essence is not identical with the

INTRODUCTION

All-Forgiving in every respect, for He is also the "Vengeful" (*al-mun-taqim*).

But Being is One. In the Essence there is no trace of multiplicity. Only at the level of the First Entification can we speak of a potential multiplicity, that is, the Names and Attributes envisaged as separate realities. But here also God is One, each Name is identical in its existence with every other. So in order for the Names and Attributes of God to be anything more than the potentialities of manifestation inherent within Being, in order for each perfection to be viewed in itself as an independent reality, in order for the Hidden Treasure to be displayed, multiplicity must be manifested. As long as there is no creation—as long as the Hidden Treasure remains hidden and the Name "Outwardly-Manifest" (*az-zahir*) remains latent—the properties of God's Names will not be able to show themselves. The Names can have no actualized significance unless there is a world within which each of them can display its properties and characteristics separate from, as well as in combination with, the properties and characteristics of the other Names.

So God's Names would not be displayed if there were no creation. Each would remain identical with every other within the Divine Unity. As a result, God's Names would have no *raison d'être*. For if God is the "Creator," it is so that He can have a creation. If He is "Merciful," it is so that He can exercise His Mercy. Ultimately—in Ibn al-'Arabi's terms—if he is "God" it is so that He can have something to be "god over" (*ma'lub*). So this perfection of the manifestation of His own Attributes is what God seeks to realize through His "Love." The "imperfection" from which He wishes to escape is the nonmanifestation of His own Names and Attributes.

But, of course, there is a great difference between the "imperfection" implied by God's Love and that implied by man's love. God's "imperfection" is only our own mental construct based on the supposition that His Names might not have loci of manifestation within which to display themselves. But they do have such loci, for the universe exists. And since God creates for all eternity—for He is the "Creator" now and forever, His nature never changing—there is no moment or time when He does not possess the perfection that is the object of His Love.

Man and the other creatures, however, are in a constant flux and undergo a perpetual movement toward their respective perfections. The objects of their loves exist separately from them, and they can

INTRODUCTION

attain these objects only through temporal becoming. From this point of view we can speak in their case of true imperfection and an inward inclination toward reaching a perfection they do not now possess. It is only when man attains his true and ultimate Beloved, God, that he can elude the process of becoming and find his perfection here and now in the eternal present.

Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers speak about two Perfections God possesses for all eternity. One is the "Essence-derived Perfection" (*al-kamal adb-dhati*), which God possesses in Himself by His very nature as Nondelimited Being. The other is the "Name-derived Perfection" (*al-kamal al-asma'i*), which requires that all the infinite ontological perfections inherent in Nonidentified Being become deployed and displayed in outward manifestation.²⁹

Qunawi often refers to the object of God's Love, that is, the Name-derived Perfection, as the "Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision" (*kamal al-jala' wa-l-istijla'*).³⁰ The Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation is actualized when all the ontological perfections inherent within Being (= the Hidden Treasure) receive their full deployment. In other words, this perfection is for the Perfect Man to receive his full outward-manifestation through the deployment of the Divine Presences as a result of the Second Entification.

As for the Perfection of Distinct-Vision, it consists of the knowledge and vision of the Hidden Treasure once it has become deployed. But this knowledge entails several kinds of knowledge at once. First, God's Knowledge of the Hidden Treasure can be none other than His Knowledge of Himself, since God is One. But at the actualization of this perfection, this Knowledge has two dimensions: the Knowledge of the Essence as such, or of the Inward; and the Knowledge of the Hidden Treasure as deployed, or of the Outward. This "Outward" becomes differentiated from God in any true sense only at the level of creation. "Before" creation, it was one with Him in every way. But "after" creation, it can be called "other than God" in respect of its multiplicity and its separation from its source. Moreover, this "other" possesses a certain reality of its own, which includes knowledge and vision. So the Perfection of Distinct-Vision also means that the "other" must contemplate itself in itself inasmuch as it is differentiated from its Source, and likewise it must contemplate God with its own eye and with God's eye as well.

So the other, which knows God both through its own vision and

INTRODUCTION

God's vision, can be no one but the Perfect Man. Only the Perfect Man can know God *as such*, since only he is the mirror for the totality of God's Names and Attributes. In other words, only he has the scope to perceive and thus to know every Attribute of God. All other entities can reflect and perceive only some of God's Names. Or, if certain entities can perceive all of them, they can do so only within a certain ontological level, not within the full range of the deployment of the Names.³¹ This is what Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers are referring to when they call the Perfect Man the "all-comprehensive generated-existent" (*al-kawn al-jami'*). The Perfect Man is "generated" since, at least in his external form, he belongs to the world of generation and corruption; or since he is a creature and not the Creator. And he is "all-comprehensive" because he embraces, quite literally, all things, from "God" to the tiniest atom.

It follows from what we have said that only the Perfect Man can truly love God. For love is "an inclination toward reaching a perfection." To truly love God means first of all to know that God *as such* is the perfection one must reach, not God as He reveals Himself through His Names and Attributes. Thus the Perfect Man is called the "servant of Allah," since the master whom he serves and loves is none but the Essence of God, which is named by the All-Comprehensive Name "Allah."³² No Name and Attribute escapes the Perfect Man's gaze and attentiveness, for he is the mirror of Nondelimited and Nonidentified Being. He desires God *as such*, not God as the Merciful, the Generous, the Bountiful. He is the mirror of Being *as such*, not of the various perfections or Attributes that are inherent within Being. Thus Qunawi says, "God cannot be the Sought or the Beloved of anyone, save the Perfect Man."³³

Man's capacity to love God in a total manner and to become the Perfect Man in whom God contemplates His own Name-derived Perfection is referred to as man's being the "vicegerent" (*khalifah*) of Allah. It is the "trust" about which God says, "We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it" (Koran XXXIII:72). Farhani writes:

When the First Theophany (= the First Entification) in its totality and in the perfection of its all-comprehensiveness, and in accordance with the property of its holy, Love-derived motion, turned its Attentiveness toward the Perfection

INTRODUCTION

of Self-Manifestation and Making-Manifest (i.e., making the entities appear in outward manifestation), only the reality of the First Isthmus-Nature (= the Perfect Man) was its complete vehicle and mirror. . . . God refers to this when He says, "We offered the Trust," i.e., the receptivity for this theophany in its totality, "to the heavens," i.e., the higher things (= the World of the Spirits), "and the earth," i.e., the lower things (= the World of Corporeal-Bodies), "and the mountains," i.e., what is between them (= the World of Image-Exemplars), "but they refused to carry it," because of their need for the perfection of their receptivity in order to bring about the perfection of Outward-Manifestation in a complete manner. They lacked perfect preparednesses and complete correspondence (*mudabat*) with the reality of that Isthmus-Nature. "They were afraid of it," i.e., they feared to act as a receptacle for it, because they were delimited by the properties of the Names (and not by the property of the All-Comprehensive Name, which manifests Being as such). "And man carried it," because of his perfect receptivity and total correspondence with the reality of that Isthmus-Nature.³⁴

Now the reality of love is one of the perfections inherent within Being. And since, according to the Sufi saying, "Being descends with all Its soldiers," love pervades all things. Wherever anything exists, love is there, inherent within the very nature of existence itself. Wherever Being displays Its Radiance, love is busy inciting the existents toward the goal of all, the Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision.

For the goal of creation to be achieved, all of Being's perfections must be deployed within and realized by the Perfect Man. So all the creatures must be actualized within the Divine Presences, since each is a precondition for the actualization of the Perfect Man. Thus each thing is God's beloved, since each thing has its share to play in achieving the desired Perfection. In Qunawi's words, "Whatever is necessary to actualize the Sought is itself the Sought."³⁵ Whatever is necessary to bring about the total deployment of God's Name-derived Perfection is itself the object of God's Love.

So love pervades all things. All motions and stillnesses, actions and reactions, causes and effects—in short, each thing that exists and

INTRODUCTION

every property and activity it displays—are derived from love. All have a single goal: to manifest the full scope of their own ontological possibilities and thus to deploy Being in Its Totality, or, in other words, to bring about the Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision.

All derives from love. In Qunawi's words, "When the theophany of Love pervaded the entities, they sought from God the Outward-Manifestation of their own realities and perfections. Hence this theophany is the key to all the . . . motions which make the hidden things manifest and which bring the archetypal-entities . . . out into actuality."³⁶

Individual man has a special role to play in bringing about the Name-derived Perfection. By the fact that he is a man, he manifests the human reality, which is nothing but the First Entification in respect of the Isthmus-Nature referred to above. But as long as man does not travel on the Path of spiritual realization, as long as he does not *actualize* all the potential perfections inherent within himself, he will not be able to fulfill the role for which he was created. If he does not reach the station of the Perfect Man, he will have failed to carry the Trust.

Of course even those human beings who do not attain the station of perfection still have a role to play, just as all creatures other than man are necessary for the Name-derived Perfection to be actualized in its totality. Farghani writes,

God placed man upon the throne of vicegerency and made him a mirror of the Presence of Divinity and the Form of the Sanctuary of Lordship.³⁷ Then He made his elemental form the primordial ground and the material for all the human forms. Some of these forms are desired in themselves, like the Perfect Men among the messengers, prophets, and great saints. And others are desired because of things outside themselves. Some of the latter are like the causes and preconditions for the entification of the constitution and form of each Perfect Man, like their fathers and mothers. Others act as organs and helpers (of the Perfect Men) by populating the other levels and (spiritual) stations, like the rest of the saints and the believers. And some are subjected to populating this world and putting it in order, for Divine Wisdom has decreed that the Perfect Men can only reach the station of Per-

INTRODUCTION

fection by means of this world. These last are the commonality of people. This disparity (in the levels of men) is a branch of the disparity that occurred at the primordial ground, when the reality of Love became related to the world and its inhabitants (i.e., at the level of the First Entification and the archetypal-entities).³⁸

In short, the beloved of all is the Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision, as a result of which the Perfect Man becomes a mirror embracing the full deployment of every ontological perfection inherent within Being. And the beloved of the Perfect Man is also this perfection, which is nothing but himself. But it is also nothing but Being, for Being is One, and at this station all multiplicity has been reintegrated into Unity. In every case the Beloved is God's perfection, or, rather, God Himself, for His perfection is nothing but His One Being. The Circle has closed upon Itself, Unity has been realized, but now within the framework of the total deployment of Being's perfections in Outward-Manifestation.

God is both Love and the Beloved. And since nothing exists but His One Being, He is also the Lover. But usually by "lover" is meant man the creature, or, in other words, man as God's Self-Manifestation still veiled from himself and before he has realized his potential perfection. Nevertheless, man is also the "beloved," as was indicated above, for only he can become the Perfect Man and thus actualize the ultimate object of God's Love.

Thus Qunawi writes,

The Beloved loves the lover because he is the cause of His Distinct-Vision of His own Perfection within him and the locus within which the dominating-force of His Beauty exercises its influence and spreads its properties. Therefore (man is also) the beloved, (and he) is the mirror of the Lover. Within man God distinctly views His own Beauties, which were latent in His Oneness before the locus-of-theophany (i.e., the Perfect Man) became entified. For (before the manifestation of God's Name-derived Perfection), excessive proximity and selfsameness veiled Him from that (i.e., from this Distinct-Vision). Then, when He gained a Distinct-Vision of Himself in something else—because of the actualization of a kind of distance and differentiation . . . —and when He saw His

INTRODUCTION

own Beauties in the locus-of-theophany, He loved them with a love which would not have come to Him without the locus and the differentiation referred to, because of the fact that proximity and oneness acted as a veil, as we mentioned.³⁹

The object of God's Love is Himself; it is the manifestation of His own Beauties and perfections, known as the "Hidden Treasure." Love then is God, the Lover is God, and the Beloved is God. All are One. Moreover, wherever a lover and beloved appear within creation, they display this oneness. In all cases, love, the lover and the beloved are ultimately one, for Being is One. So a lover loves the manifestation of his own attributes, just as God loves the Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision. Every man is a "transcription of Being" (*nuskbat al-wujud*), so within him all God's Attributes are embraced. For just this reason, he is potentially a Perfect Man. So when man loves something, he loves only himself, that is, his own attributes and ontological perfections as reflected in the beloved. He may love them in God—for God is his very reality, his very Self—or he may love them in the creatures, which also manifest man's own reality, that is, Being as such.

This is why Qunawi writes, "Every lover in reality loves only himself. But the form of the beloved stands before him as a mirror in which he contemplates himself in respect of complete affinity and spiritual parallelism (*mubadbat*). So what is called 'beloved' is a precondition for the lover's love of himself."⁴⁰ Love can take place only through the mutual parallelism and affinity that exists between lover and beloved, each of which reflects the other. Ultimately, this is because the prototype of all love—that is, God's love for His Name-derived Perfection—is based on just such a duality.

But the end of love is unity. In the last analysis, God and the Perfect Man are One, for Being is One. We can even say that God as the "Inward" is the Essence or Being as such, whereas God as the "Outward" is the Perfect Man or Being deployed. And God "is the Outward and the Inward" (Koran LVII:3).

DIVINE AND HUMAN LOVE

In discussions of Persian poetry, the question of whether the poetical images employed are only symbols or, on the contrary, represent "real" things is often raised. Is the poet a mystic or a profane

INTRODUCTION

man, or has he perhaps employed two points of view in his poetry?⁴¹ From our analysis of 'Iraqi's ideas, the reader may have concluded that as a poet and author 'Iraqi—at least in the *Lama'at*—concerns himself only with “mystical love.”

But this is a premature judgment. A careful examination of our discussion and of the *Lama'at* itself will illustrate the fact that 'Iraqi—like Qunawi, Farghani, and other members of Ibn al-'Arabi's school—is not discussing mystical love, nor profane love, nor both together, at least not in any exclusive sense. He is discussing love as such, in all the forms it may take, whether “mystical love” (man's love for God), “profane love” (man's love for woman or vice versa), “allegorical love” (*'ishq-i majazi*—love for God as contemplated within His Self-Manifestation in the form of woman), Divine Love (God's love for man and the creatures), “creaturely love” (the love of each creature for its own perfection), or any other phenomenon that may be properly called “love.”⁴² Each of these is nothing but Nondelimited Love, which has become entified and delimited in keeping with the receptacle within which It manifests Itself.

When Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers speak of “Being,” they do not mean the Being of God as opposed to that of the creatures, or vice versa. They mean Being as such, in all the forms it may take, without exception. For them the “science of Being” is the science of all sciences, since nothing but Being *is*. If someone can understand this science, he has understood the principle of everything. To grasp the nature of Being Itself is to grasp the nature of all that exists.

“Love” is one of the primary attributes of Being, which means that whatever exists must participate in it, just as it must participate in Being. To understand the nature of Love and its myriad self-manifestations is to grasp the nature of Being Itself, for the two are in fact one.

Of course one may still want to maintain that 'Iraqi is speaking basically of a “mystical” concept of love. This is true enough, provided one remembers the close relationship between the words “mysticism” and “mystery.” If a mystic is one who has knowledge of the “mysteries,” then certainly 'Iraqi's concept of love is “mystical.” In Ibn al-'Arabi's school the Arabic term that may best be translated as “mystery” (*sirr*) is practically equivalent to “archetypal-entity.” The mysteries of things are hidden from all but God and the greatest prophets and saints. Qunawi defines a thing's mystery as its inward and unseen reality. He says that when we come to understand some-

INTRODUCTION

thing's mystery, we have understood its fundamental nature and those of its inward dimensions that are concealed from its observed and outward existence. "Whoever knows a thing's mystery knows the cause and the peculiarity of that thing. He knows the primordial-ground of its source, the reason for its properties and its outward manifestation, and its hidden and evident concomitants."⁴³ Moreover, true knowledge of something's mystery means that man must have a direct vision of that thing as it is in itself, that is, a suprarational knowledge that derives from "unveiling."⁴⁴

The teachings of Ibn al-'Arabi's school on Being or on Love pertain to the "mystery" of these realities, and hence we may call these figures "mystics." But in no way does this imply a sentimental or irrational—which is quite different from suprarational—attitude on their part. Nor does it mean they ignore or are unconcerned with the phenomena of this world. In their eyes, love is love, whether it is love for God or love for the human form. God's love for the Perfection of Distinct-Manifestation and Distinct-Vision is the source of all other loves, it is the "mystery" of love. Whoever truly understands it will understand "the reason for love's properties and its outward manifestation (in all the forms it may assume), and its hidden and evident concomitants."

In short, the reader must remember that 'Iraqi's discussion is not limited to love for God or love for the human form. He is analyzing unqualified and nondelimited love, not love of any specific kind. In whatever manner we may be concerned with love, the treatise will be of relevance to us and will serve to turn our attention toward love's very Essence.

NOTES

1. The Sufis of Ibn al-'Arabi's school employ the term "intellect" in two basic senses, which one can usually distinguish in English by the use of capital and small letters. Thus the "Intellect" is the first creation of God, also called the "Holy Spirit" or the "Supreme Pen." It possesses direct knowledge of the realities of all things, which it contemplates in God. Then the "intellect" is the microcosmic reflection of this reality within man, as will become clear below when the Five Divine Presences are discussed. Through different degrees of identification with its own source, man's intellect can come to have direct knowledge of the realities of things as they are known by God. This knowledge is referred to as "unveiling." But to avoid confusion between unveiling and the rational, discursive function of the intellect, the Sufis nor-

INTRODUCTION

mally employ the word "intellect" in a pejorative sense, alluding to the limited powers of man's comprehension as such, cut off from divine illumination. When they do employ the term in a positive sense, they are invariably speaking about the "First Intellect" or the "intellects," i.e., the Spirits or angels. Rumi summarizes their reasons for avoiding the term "intellect" to refer to a positive human function in his verse, "The particular intellect has disgraced the Intellect" (Mathnawi V:463).

All of this helps to explain why in Islam there is no fundamental opposition between "intellect" and "unveiling," or in more Western terms, between "logic" and "mysticism." The Sufis do not deny the findings of the intellect; they only claim that it is inadequate to reach the fundamental truth about things without outside guidance, i.e., first revelation, and then unveiling. They do not deny the teachings of the Peripatetic philosophers in principle; rather, they accept those data for the comprehension of which the unaided intellect is "adequate" (in the Thomist sense). But at the same time they hold that many of the philosophers' teachings are invalid, since they concern matters that transgress the intellect's natural limits. See W. C. Chittick, "Mysticism vs. Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Tusi, al-Qunawi Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17 (1981): pp. 87-104.

2. See the forthcoming book tentatively called *Ascendant Stars of Faith: The Sufism of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi*, by W. C. Chittick, especially the first treatise translated there, in which Qunawi presents the Sufi point of view concerning these matters.

3. See W. C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn al-'Arabi's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on Its Author," *Sophia Perennis*, IV, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 43-58; also *Ascendant Stars*, chap. 3.

4. A translation and analysis of Ghazzali's work is being prepared by Nasrollah Pourjavady. Part of what is said here about the relationship between 'Iraqi and Ghazzali is based on discussions with Pourjavady.

5. See the chapter "Knowledge and Love" in T. Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Lahore, 1950).

6. Qunawi, *Tabsirat al-mubtadi wa tadbkirat al-muntabi*, part I, 1; translated in *Ascendant Stars*.

7. See W. C. Chittick, "Sadr al-Din Qunawi on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (1981): pp. 171-184.

8. In order that the present discussion be kept within bounds, certain statements will be made that would obviously need much more clarification were a complete philosophical exposition of the subject at hand being attempted. But that is hardly the purpose of the present work. The whole of the enormously fruitful philosophical tradition of Islam, especially after Ibn al-'Arabi, concerns itself largely with clarifying the nature of Being. Such figures as Ibn Turkah Isfahani, Mulla Sadra, Sabziwari, and dozens of others concerned themselves primarily with delimiting and defining this most non-delimited and undefinable of all realities.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important discussions with which many of these figures occupied themselves was proving that Being is not a mental construct, but is rather "principal" (*asil*). It is concretely existent in Itself in the most real of all senses and is the source of all that exists. Jami devotes part of the introduction of his commentary on the present work to proving that "Being" is not an abstract term. On the importance of the discussion of Being in Islamic philosophy, see T. Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo, 1971); and H. Corbin, *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques* (Téhéran-Paris, 1964).

9. See the commentary on Flashes VII, X and XXIV.

10. One should qualify this statement by recalling that there are also "impossible things," i.e., imaginary things that because of the very nature of Being cannot exist outside of the mind.

11. Jami, *Naqd an-nusus*, ed. W. C. Chittick (Tehran, 1977), pp. 26, 84.

12. See *Ascendant Stars*, Glossary: NAME.

13. *An-Nusus*, appended to Kashani's *Sharh manazil as-sa'irin* (Tehran, 1315/1897-1898), p. 296; also appended to Ibn Turkah's *Tambid al-qawa'id* (Tehran, 1316/1898-1899), p. 212; the same passage also occurs in Qunawi's *Miftab al-gbayb*, on the margin of al-Fanari's *Misbab al-ins* (Tehran, 1323/1905-1906), p. 79.

14. See *Ascendant Stars*: ISTHMUS.

15. The whole discussion of the First and Second Entifications, the various names by which each may be called, and the distinction between the two in the views of different Sufis is exceedingly complex. In the above paragraphs we have largely followed Jami's introduction to his commentary on the *Lama'at*, which itself is based primarily upon the views of Sa'iduddin Farghani, whose writings are based explicitly on Qunawi's lectures. Qunawi himself does not discuss these points systematically in his works, but he does allude to them. His most explicit discussion is found in *Tabrir al-bayan fi taq-rir shu'ab al-iman* and *al-Hadiyyah* (see *Ascendant Stars*). Other members of Ibn al-'Arabi's school often treat the various levels of entification differently. In particular, it is common for them to identify the First and Second Entifications with the levels of *abadiyyah* and *wabidiyyah* respectively.

16. For further discussion of the Perfect Man, although not completely within the context of Qunawi's teachings, see W. C. Chittick, "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jami," *Studia Islamica* 49, (1979): 135-157.

17. For a much more thorough development of this concept and the different forms it takes, see W. C. Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qunawi to al-Qaysari," *Studia Islamica*, forthcoming.

18. *I'jaz al-bayan fi tafsir umm al-Qur'an* (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1368/1949), p. 113; also as *at-Tafsir as-sufi li-l-Qur'an*, ed. A. A. 'Ata' (Cairo, 1389/1969), p. 221.

19. Depending on the point of view and the context, the term "Unseen" may be wider in scope, in which case its correlative "Visible" will be narrow-

INTRODUCTION

er. The same sort of relationship holds true for many correlative terms. See the commentary on Flash VIII.

20. The term "entity" is the most common expression in Ibn al-'Arabi's school for what is called a "quiddity" (*mabiyyab*) by most of the Moslem philosophers. Practically all of Islamic philosophy—especially the later schools—devotes a good deal of attention to the question of the distinction between being (or existence) and quiddity.

21. See the commentary on Flashes X and XXI. Qunawi refers to this station as the "Point at the Center of the Circle" (*nuqta wasat ad-da'irah*). See *Ascendant Stars*: CIRCLE.

22. *I'jaz al-bayan*, p. 112/220. On the translation of the *badith* employing "is" instead of "was," see Ibn al-'Arabi's remarks quoted by Jami, *Naqd an-nusus*, p. 93, note 96.

23. *Mashariq ad-darari*, ed. S. J. Ashtiyani (Mashhad, 1357/1978), p. 606.

24. Qunawi, *an-Nafahat al-ilabiyyab* (Tehran, 1316/1898–1899), p. 220.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.

26. *Miftab al-ghayb*, p. 150.

27. W. C. Chittick, "Ibn al-'Arabi's own Summary of the Fusus: 'The Imprint of the Bezels of Wisdom,'" *Sophia Perennis* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1975): 88–128; 2, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 67–106 (1, no. 2, p. 94).

28. 'Afifuddin at-Tilimsani, *Sharh al-fusus*, "al-fass al-ibrahimi," Ms. Şehid Ali Paşa 1248 (Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul).

29. See Qunawi, *an-Nusus*, p. 287/199; also Farghani, *Mashariq ad-darari*, p. 17.

30. See *I'jaz al-bayan*, pp. 118/226–128/236, where Qunawi describes in detail the whole process of creation and its relation to Love in terms of this perfection.

31. Each of the Presences reflects all of God's Names and Attributes, but in a limited manner, since it can reflect them only at its own ontological level. Thus, for example, the Universal Intellect—also called the "Supreme Pen" and identified with the archangel Gabriel—embraces all that exists, but only at the level of the Spiritual World. Things that become manifest in ontological levels below it are embraced by it only in principle. It always remains transcendent in relation to the World of Image-Exemplars and the World of Corporeal-Bodies, since its level is that of Intellect and Spirit. It may become manifest in the lower worlds, but in itself it does not enter into them.

32. On the importance of this Name in this respect, see Chittick, "The Perfect Man."

33. *Miftab al-ghayb*, p. 256.

34. *Mashariq ad-darari*, p. 57. See *Ascendant Stars*: TRUST; also, "The Perfect Man."

35. *Al-Fukuk*, on the margin of Kashani's *Sharh manazil as-sa'irin* (Tehran, 1315/1897–1898), p. 227.

36. *I'jaz al-bayan*, pp. 122/230–123/231.

INTRODUCTION

37. The reader should remember the famous *badith*: "God created Adam upon his own Form." See "The Perfect Man."
38. *Masbariq ad-darari*, p. 52.
39. *An-Nafabat al-ilabiyyab*, p. 60.
40. *I'jaz al-bayan*, p. 210/324.
41. See A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975), pp. 288ff.
42. Jami classifies the different kinds of love in his *Larwami*.
43. *I'jaz al-bayan*, p. 245/359-360.
44. See Flash VIII; also *Ascendant Stars*: UNVEILING.